United Nations UNW/2015/7

Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Distr.: General
20 July 2015

Original: English

Second regular session of 2015
15 and 16 September 2015
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Organizational matters

Report on the annual session of 2015, 30 June to 2 July 2015

I. Organizational matters

1. The annual session of 2015 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 30 June to 2 July 2015.

2. The Executive Board elected the following Vice-Presidents for the remainder of 2015, Sejla Durbuzović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), representing the Eastern European States, and Alma Bibiana Pérez (Colombia), representing the Latin American and Caribbean States.

3. The Executive Board adopted the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the annual session (UNW/2015/L.3) and approved the report on its first regular session, held on 9 February 2015 (UNW/2015/3). The Executive Board also approved the proposed provisional agenda and workplan for the second regular session of 2015, to be held from 15 to 16 September.

4. The Executive Board adopted three decisions (2015/2, 2015/3 and 2015/4) as contained in the annex to the present report.

II. Opening statements

5. The President of the Executive Board, Ib Petersen (Permanent Representative of Denmark), in his opening remarks, welcomed the newly appointed Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Programme.

6. He described his tenure so far as President of the Board as a rewarding one and the year 2015 as significant, marking significant celebrations and forums, such as the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. He expressed his strong appreciation for the hard work that UN-Women put into preparing Member States for the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and also for several of the significant events in 2015, such as the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa, and

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the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris.

7. The President mentioned his participation in the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and UN-Women to Jordan in 2015, which he said served to underline the need for UN-Women not only on the operational, but also on the normative and advocacy fronts. He cited the impressive work done by the Entity and examples of a strong Delivering as one functionality. He highlighted the need for the Board to reflect on ways in which the work of the Entity could be strengthened for greater impact on the ground and urged delegations to interactively engage with UN-Women with a view to gaining insights from and, in turn, providing advice to, UN-Women management. He gave an overview of the reports to be considered at the current session, including the internal audit and evaluations reports which, he stated, demonstrated a very high standard of professionalism.

8. In her opening remarks, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, thanked Member States for their significant contribution to the twenty-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The review benefited from the input of 168 countries, as well as regional commissions and civil society, thus providing a secure platform of evidence.

9. In introducing her report on progress made on the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2014-2017, including operational activities in 2014 (UNW/2015/6), the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director informed the Board that UN-Women had delivered $124.8 million in country programmes in 2014, with an overall implementation rate for budgeted activities of 82 per cent, which exceeded the target of 75 per cent in the strategic plan. She noted that the new regional architecture had served to strengthen the operational presence of UN-Women. That had resulted in country programmes that were better aligned with national priorities and in a better position to deliver. Citing examples of concrete results over the past year, she underscored that the Entity worked in collaboration with key national partners, United Nations agencies and public institutions, as well as the private sector. Some of the examples mentioned included the work of the Entity towards the creation of gender equality committees in parliaments; the enhancement of efforts to incorporate gender-related consideration into national plans with strengthened planning frameworks; the strengthening of legislation on ending violence against women and girls; and the development of national plans on women and peace and security.

10. Referring to the subject of resources, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director drew attention to one of the major reasons for the lack of progress in many countries as identified in the national reports during the twenty-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, namely, the inadequate financing of women's ministries and women's and girls' programmes. That underinvestment had significantly hindered the realization of the rights of women and girls in several countries. She stressed that in order to close that funding gap and to achieve the goal of the new post-2015 sustainable development framework, unprecedented financing proportionate to the scale of the desired change would be required.

11. She urged Member States to dedicate investments to the implementation of gender equality commitments and thanked them for their work so far in the negotiations on the sustainable development goals and for their efforts in supporting Goal 5 and the other gender equality-related targets.

12. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director reiterated that resource mobilization remained a major challenge. She claimed however, that three new records had been set: UN-Women had met reduced core and non-core resource targets, with $330 million in total income; and 143 countries had contributed to core resources, which represented 74 per cent of the membership of the United Nations. While noting that diversification was an essential element of the Entity's resource mobilization strategy, she underlined the importance of innovative partnerships, citing various examples.

13. She concluded her presentation by stressing the importance of the Board's close engagement with the Entity and the solidarity of Member States, looking forward to the participation of Heads of State in the upcoming "Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Commitment to Action" scheduled for 27 September 2015, co-hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and the President of China, Xi Jinping.

14. In response to the opening statements, there was resounding commendation from the floor for the results achieved by UN-Women in 2014, with many delegations applauding the Entity for the effective delivery of its mandate which, limited resources notwithstanding, was testament to its value added to the United Nations system. Some speakers acknowledged the significant role of the Entity in the growing global recognition of women's rights as being central to the achievement of sustainable development. That was exemplified by the stand-alone goal on gender equality, supplemented by cross-cutting targets under other goals, as outlined in the report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970 and Corr.1). The Entity was also commended for its role in promoting a gender perspective in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the financing for development negotiations and its work in relation to the fifteen-year review of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. Some speakers congratulated UN-Women on the extensive and professional work done in connection with the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and, in particular, the fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

15. Reflecting on progress made on the implementation of the strategic plan and looking forward, delegations noted the significance of the achievements, given that UN-Women had been in existence for only five years. The Entity was already seen as a trustworthy, indispensable and effective partner of choice. Many speakers stressed that the role of UN-Women was critical to the achievement of gender equality across the globe.

16. One delegation called upon the Entity to continue strengthening its strategic partnerships with civil society and national entities in its operational activities, providing such partners with adequate support for capacity-building. In that way, UN-Women could serve as "a trainer of trainers, a counsellor of counsellors and an advocate of advocates to obtain more effective and sustainable results". The knowledge gateway for women's economic empowerment, www.empowerwomen.org,

was cited as an excellent example of a platform where a wide range of stakeholders could share best practices, allowing for further improvement of the operational activities of UN-Women through collective wisdom and first-hand experiences. Many speakers applauded the HeForShe campaign and the enhanced advocacy role of the Entity. A Member State congratulated UN-Women for its targeted and sustained advocacy in promoting and supporting women's leadership in peace, security and humanitarian responses and was encouraged by the continued focus on that area.

17. Many speakers also appreciated the work done by UN-Women in mainstreaming gender equality throughout the United Nations system. A delegation considered the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to be an important contribution towards achieving gender equality objectives within the United Nations system. The speakers recognized the efforts of UN-Women in the implementation of the Action Plan, including all the technical support provided to participating entities. Member States considered that the implementation of the Action Plan not only strengthened accountability but also served as a source of incentives for integrating gender equality into the operations of United Nations entities.

18. It was emphasized, however, that the Action Plan needed to be fully transparent and that the individual scores for each of the participating entities needed to be shared. UN-Women was urged to continue to advocate for that best practice. Member States expressed the wish to see additional funding allocated within the system to the implementation of the Action Plan, in order to strengthen its quality assurance process. In addition, they requested stronger indicators with respect to reporting on gender equality results, in the next phase of the Action Plan.

19. Several speakers highlighted national initiatives aimed at the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, citing many achievements in that regard. Some noted with appreciation the attention paid to indigenous women and girls and women and girls with disabilities and the increased focus of the Entity on humanitarian action. One speaker emphasized that ending violence against women should be a national priority and commended UN-Women for its work on that issue in the speaker's region.

20. One delegation urged the Entity to continue developing partnerships with national committees, stressing that they had the potential to be a valuable fundraising resource and link to the private sector and civil society.

III. Evaluation

21. The Director of Evaluation presented the report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2014 (UNW/2015/5). The report provided information on the performance of the evaluation function and on the contribution of UN-Women to the United Nations system-wide coordination of gender-responsive evaluation and national evaluation capacity development. It also set out the 2015 programme of work for the independent Evaluation Office.

22. In recognition of the importance of strengthening oversight of the evaluation function, the independent Evaluation Office established a global evaluation oversight system with the purpose of providing transparent information on the performance of

the evaluation function at the corporate and decentralized levels. The global evaluation oversight system was based on eight key performance indicators. In 2014, a review of performance based on the key performance indicators continued to be presented to senior management at headquarters and field offices, highlighting areas of strength and issues that required immediate management attention. That had contributed to enhancing the attention of senior management to evaluations.

23. It was found that UN-Women had a strong evaluation function, as demonstrated by its key performance indicators. However, improvements were needed in certain areas. In addition, UN-Women strategically contributed to strengthening gender-responsive capacities within the United Nations system and at the national level. It was recommended that that be intensified within the transformative post-2015 development agenda.

24. In addition to the report on the evaluation function, a corporate evaluation on the contribution of UN-Women to women's economic empowerment (UNW/2015/CRP.7), a review of policies and practices to promote gender-responsive evaluation systems (UNW/2015/CRP.6), and the respective management response in each case were presented.

25. With respect to the proposed approach and steps to be taken to increase the compliance rate with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, delegations supported the efforts of UN-Women to continue work on improving the rates of implementation. It was mentioned that the fact that the Director of the independent Evaluation Office also chaired the United Nations Evaluation Group for 2015 offered significant scope to advance the gender-responsive evaluation agenda.

26. Member States noted that evaluation coverage and completion rates needed attention; however, those issues had been recognized and steps were under way to address the weaknesses. They expressed interest in learning more from UN-Women about its plans and timelines in that regard.

27. Delegations stressed the importance of the corporate evaluation on the contribution of UN-Women to women's economic empowerment and that area of work. They considered the recommendation to increase the focus on thought leadership on rights-based and gender-responsive work on macroeconomic policy particularly useful, given that it could serve to strengthen the leverage, impact and effectiveness of the United Nations country teams.

28. Delegations urged the Entity to continue to cooperate with other partners, such as the World Bank Group, when developing diagnostics for the economic empowerment of women. They welcomed the finding that the Entity's current comparative advantage was in its policy and normative work which, in their view, provided a rights-based perspective and approach to intergovernmental dialogue. They concurred with the recommendation that UN-Women should further strengthen its leadership in coordination and joint programming to advance women's economic empowerment within the United Nations system and with the analysis that UN-Women should take advantage of existing coordination forums at headquarters and at country levels, with a view to avoiding additional layers.

29. Two delegations expressed their strong support for the recommendation that a clear strategic focus and theory of change for the Entity's work on women's

economic empowerment be established to ensure that a common institutional direction was communicated throughout the Entity.

30. In relation to the management response on this item, Member States welcomed the practice of presenting short- and medium-term actions and recommended that future reports include more detail on those responsible for follow-up actions.

31. On the review of policies and practices to promote gender-responsive evaluation systems, Member States considered that it was an example of the commendable system-wide leadership of UN-Women. The review process — the first of its kind — served as a baseline study on the status of gender-responsive evaluation across the United Nations system.

32. Two delegations joined in welcoming the leadership of the independent Evaluation Office in promoting various innovative ways of reaching more beneficiaries of capacity-building in gender-responsive evaluations. They urged management to adjust further planning according to lessons learned and welcomed adjustments made following corporate evaluations relating to organizational effectiveness at both the country and regional levels, as well as strategic partnerships, to inform the midterm review of the strategic plan.

IV. Draft integrated budget estimates, 2016-2017

33. The Director of Coordination, also in his capacity as Acting Director, Management and Administration, made a preliminary presentation to the Executive Board (prior to its formal submission at the Board's 2015 second regular session) on the draft integrated budget estimates for the Entity for the biennium 2016-2017.

34. The integrated budget is the financial plan that allows the Entity to have the financial and institutional capacity to achieve the results set out in its approved strategic plan, 2014-2017 and covers all cost categories and both regular and other resources within a single, consolidated proposal. The current projections were for a biennial integrated budget of $880 million in voluntary contributions, with $196.4 million (gross) requested as an appropriation.

35. The financial context was outlined as follows:

(a) The 2014-2015 budget was $690 million in voluntary contributions ($340 million in regular resources; $350 million in other resources);

(b) 2014 was the first year in which UN-Women achieved targets in relation to regular resources and other resources;

(c) The funding of UN-Women remained close to a 50:50 split between core and non-core resources.

36. As stated in the draft report, the General Assembly would continue to consider the resources from the regular budget required to service the normative intergovernmental processes, policy and coordination work in the context of its review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, totalling $15.3 million for UN-Women, and received as assessed contributions.

37. It should be noted that 2014 was the first year in which UN-Women achieved and slightly exceeded its target contributions for both regular and other resources. Based on that positive trend and donor intelligence, UN-Women considered it

realistic to propose material growth in its voluntary contributions. UN-Women also believed that it needed to be proactive with regard to its growth and related requirements in order to implement its mandate.

38. One speaker sought more information on the plans of the Entity if funding projections were not met and there was a need to reprioritize its work. Another delegation requested information on the flagship programmes currently being developed by the Entity; clarification on target countries; types of programmes; and how that initiative related to the Entity's funding projections.

39. One Member State stressed the urgency of exploring the possibility of increasing the allocation to UN-Women of the United Nations assessed contributions and of taking up that matter in the Fifth Committee.

40. In response to the comments made, the Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Programme and the Director of Coordination/ Acting Director, Management and Administration highlighted that projections were consistent with the upward trend since the inception of the Entity on the non-core front. They nevertheless assured delegations of the existence of contingency plans in the event that financial projections were not fulfilled. It was further explained that flagship programmes referred to a limited number of high-impact initiatives to make normative and operational linkages and to facilitate the leveraging of economies of scale. The Executive Board would be further apprised of that initiative in due course.

V. Pledging event

41. Opening the pledging event, the Deputy Executive Director of the Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau thanked all Member States for their continued support to UN-Women. She recalled various statements by delegations that underscored the need for UN-Women to be predictably, sustainably and sufficiently funded in order to fully and effectively implement its mandate. She noted that several Member States had highlighted the critical role of the Entity in the delivery of core mandates such as in the context of human rights, peace and security and the implementation and general roll-out of the post-2015 development agenda. Stressing the importance of core resources and multi-year pledges, she stated that funding remained the greatest challenge faced by UN-Women. Five years later, UN-Women had yet to meet the critical funding benchmark of $500 million set at its inception. The Entity continued to be dependent on a few significant donors for the majority of its resources. In that light, she urged Member States to match their strong political support with transformative financing that would inspire others along a similar vein and enable the Entity to live up to the high expectations of Member States at the national, regional and global levels.

42. In his presentation, the Head of Resource Mobilization outlined the funding trends so far and presented an overview of the current situation. He categorized different donor levels and stressed the political and financial importance of contributions even from smaller economies. He highlighted key milestones in 2014 as follows: (a) The Entity secured its highest level of income: $330 million (a 17 per cent increase over the $275 million received in 2013). Total voluntary contributions amounted to $164 million for regular core resources ($157 million in 2013) and $159 million for other non-core resources ($119 million in 2013); (b) UN-Women

had the highest number of Government core donors since its establishment (143), reflecting its universal mandate; and (c) The total contribution from the private sector, including funds raised by national committees, was $7.9 million.

43. Many speakers reiterated their strong support for UN-Women. They recognized the exceptional work done in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment around the world; commended the Entity for its remarkable achievements in meeting revenue targets for both regular and other resources; and looked forward to the next structured dialogue on the funding of UN-Women at the second regular session of the Board in 2015.

44. Many speakers announced their pledges as outlined in the annex to the present report, while others stressed their continued political support and appreciation for the work of the Entity in their own countries, highlighting important examples. Some expressed concern that the Entity was funded well below the critical mass needed to carry out its basic tasks and implement its mandate and called upon other Member States to increase contributions, in particular to the core budget. While commending UN-Women for its achievements despite its financial constraints, one speaker urged others to step up contributions to the Entity, at a level commensurate with their political commitment and the ambitious mandate that they collectively entrusted to UN-Women.

45. Some delegations acknowledged the efforts of the Entity towards the broadening of the donor base and the expansion of partnerships, including with the private sector.

VI. Special briefing: Operational response of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women at the country level

46. The UN-Women representative in Afghanistan made a presentation on the work of UN-Women in the country and gave a summary of the development results to date.[1] With respect to the key areas of support, it was noted that all of the UN-Women programmes were directed towards strengthening national women's machineries, both governmental and non-governmental, through financial and technical support, as well as forming national partnerships for the delivery of programming. UN-Women channels its funds through national civil society and also supports various ministries in their efforts to mainstream gender-responsive policies and planning throughout their institutional processes. The UN-Women Afghanistan programme has three thematic pillars: eliminating violence against women, political and economic empowerment, and coordination and advocacy.

47. The Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations led the way in thanking UN-Women for its work in Afghanistan. His appreciation for the work of the Entity was echoed by additional delegations.

[1] See http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/executive%20board/2015/as%2015/un%20women%20afghanistan%20programme-pdf.

VII. Audit

48. The Deputy Director of the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations of presented the report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014 (UNW/2015/4). Based on the audit reports issued to date and reported to the Executive Board since 2012, the top three recurring findings relate to:

(a) Resource mobilization: Delays in strategizing and initiating the mobilization of funds evidenced by lack of, or absence of, a resource mobilization strategy; unrealistic or unattained non-core funding targets; and ineffective communication with donors and inadequate capacity to perform the resource mobilization function);

(b) Project monitoring and oversight: Inconsistent and insufficient monitoring activities and inadequate management of advances to implementing partners;

(c) Procurement: Lack of procurement planning and strategy, weak vendor due diligence and lack of contract management.

49. The main high-priority recommendations of the audit were as follows:

(a) Corporate recommendations (relating to the lack of adequate regional office support for and monitoring of the country office in the absence of senior management in country and a lack of compliance with the Programme and Operations Manual by headquarters regarding the provision of additional staffing in a conflict/post-conflict context);

(b) Recommendations relating to headquarter units (lack of clarity regarding resource needs; mandate; responsibilities for monitoring/oversight; reporting and training; and the insufficiency of the support systems and efforts relating to results management);

(c) Recommendations relating to field-based offices (risk management (inadequate assessment and management of risks); programme and project management (deficiencies in project design, planning and implementation, deficiencies in the management of partner advances and inadequate oversight in respect of programme activities); and partnership and resource mobilization (delays in strategizing and mobilizing funds)).

50. As at 31 December 2014, the rate of implementation was 75 per cent. This compared favourably with the 31 December 2013 implementation rate of 67 per cent. As at 31 December 2014, three recommendations had been outstanding for more than 18 months. Two were implemented within the first quarter of 2015.

51. The main conclusions of the internal audit indicate that the internal controls, governance and risk management processes were, in general, functioning. Management took steps to address audit recommendations, which should enhance the ability of UN-Women to effectively and efficiently deliver on its mandate. No financial losses were identified in the cases investigated and closed during 2014.

52. The annual report of the Audit Advisory Committee for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014 (UNW/2015/4/Add.1) in relation to UN-Women was presented by the Chair of the Committee. With respect to internal audit, it was

recommended that the Entity continue to assess options for the most appropriate model for its internal audit function, namely, whether it would continue to outsource the function through the service-level agreement established with UNDP or create an internal audit function within UN-Women, ensuring that value for money was obtained and the appropriate level of audit assurance and resources provided.

53. The Audit Advisory Committee supported the continued strengthening of the internal audit services of UN-Women in order to ensure sufficiency of audit coverage in its annual plan. The Audit Advisory Committee reiterated the importance of regularly monitoring and assessing resource levels and capacity to ensure that they were appropriate and sufficient to address the overall assurance needs of UN-Women.

54. The Audit Advisory Committee further recommended that the UN-Women Audit Unit, outsourced to UNDP, be continued until such time that UN-Women has its full senior management complement in place and the costs and benefits of any subsequent transition of the internal audit function are identified and approved by the Executive Board. In that respect, the Audit Advisory Committee reiterated the importance of having an independent organizational focal point in UN-Women to oversee internal audit activities and ensure that results are integrated into the senior management structure.

55. Following the presentations on audit matters, the Director of Coordination/ Acting Director, Management and Administration, briefed the Executive Board on the respective management responses.

56. Member States that took the floor expressed appreciation for the reports and welcomed the progress made in addressing the internal audit recommendations. They underscored the importance of implementing all of the recommendations as a matter of priority and urged the Entity to produce an estimated time frame in that regard.

57. The Member States requested additional details from the Office of Audit and Investigations on the procurement recommendations, in order to facilitate a better understanding of the root causes and to ascertain whether the efforts made by UN-Women to address procurement challenges were adequate. They also requested elaboration within the audit report on the minor risks that could be easily solved, as opposed to those that were systemic, and in turn affect strategic objectives. They proposed that future reports include information on whether resourcing of the audit function enabled the Office to effectively carry out its activities as necessary.

58. Delegations concurred with the Audit Advisory Committee's opinion that an independent organizational focal point in UN-Women to provide oversight in respect of the internal audit activities and results should be established and took note of the estimated cost provided by management. They recommended that the Executive Board be kept informed of progress in that regard, including the presentation of the full cost implications, moving towards the midterm review of the strategic plan.

59. Responding to comments from the floor regarding further expansion and considerations with respect to UN-Women having its own internal audit unit, management referred to the resources required and, at the same time, reassured Member States that UN-Women, in accordance with its mandate, would continue dialogue with Member States to ascertain the best systematic formulation of its

audit structure. UN-Women reaffirmed its robust accountability for all audit and investigation matters.

VIII. Report of the field visit of the Bureau of the UN-Women Executive Board to Viet Nam

60. The President of the Executive Board for 2014, the Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations, in his capacity as team leader of the field visit, presented the report on the field visit of the Bureau of the UN-Women Executive Board to Viet Nam from 7 to 12 December 2014 (UNW/2015/CRP.9).

61. The objective of the field visit was to gain a first-hand understanding of the work of UN-Women at the country level in cooperation with the Government of Viet Nam. In addition, the Bureau aimed to gather insight on the extent and manner of cooperation among development partners in collaboration with UN-Women. This included inter-agency interaction under the Delivering as One initiative and cooperation with civil society organizations.

62. Recommendations to UN-Women as outlined in the report included the following:

(a) Support provided by UN-Women in gender mainstreaming should specifically target traditional attitudes towards women and girls to ensure that development projects deliver more sustainable results;

(b) To meet the demand for strengthened policy and implementation capacity formulated by the Government of Viet Nam, UN-Women would need to continue to provide high-level policy advice to ensure the sustainable integration of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into all future national planning;

(c) Support from UN-Women is needed to meet the training needs formulated by the Government of Viet Nam and to provide respective capacity-building. This assistance should include, inter alia, continuous support to line ministries in the development of planning, monitoring and reporting tools and guidelines to underpin meeting the specific needs of women and girls;

(d) UN-Women should continue to broaden its partnerships, including those with the private sector. Furthermore, UN-Women should consider the lessons learned from its support to the Government of Viet Nam in this specific transition situation and how these lessons could be instructive as other countries prepare to reach middle-income country status in the next 5 to 10 years;

(e) UN-Women should ensure that, in all endeavours related to disaster risk reduction and climate change, specific implications related to gender are considered with a long-term perspective;

(f) UN-Women should continue to serve as a facilitator of substantive dialogues between the Government of Viet Nam and civil society organizations and advocate for more partnerships that integrate consultations with these organizations into the regular planning processes of national policies and laws;

(g) Where appropriate, the Bureau of the UN-Women Executive Board should consider undertaking further field visits.

63. The delegation expressed confidence that the cooperation between the Government of Viet Nam and UN-Women would continue to strengthen the capacity of the Government to implement its international and domestic commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including the most vulnerable.

64. The President of the Executive Board thanked the Government of Viet Nam on behalf of the delegation for its hospitality and for providing the opportunity to discuss gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls with ministers and senior representatives at the national and regional levels. The delegation expressed gratitude to the UN-Women Viet Nam office for its warm welcome and to the UN-Women Executive Board secretariat team for the well-prepared agenda and the successful implementation of the first-ever field visit of a UN-Women Executive Board Bureau.

65. The Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations thanked the President of the Executive Board and his delegation for their visit to her country and for their related report. She appreciated that the report acknowledged the strong commitment of the Government of Viet Nam to address the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and underscored its important achievements which, she stressed, would not have been possible without the invaluable support of UN-Women and the United Nations country team. She expressed her Government's support for the recommendations as outlined in the report and welcomed in particular the recognition of the role of the Delivering as One approach, noting the strengthening of coherence and effectiveness in the work of the United Nations in Viet Nam and the role of the Entity in that process. In concluding, she urged UN-Women to take this into consideration in order to better support Viet Nam and other developing countries.

IX. Closing

66. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked the President for his leadership, the Vice-Presidents for their supportive guidance throughout the session and the Board members and observers for their active engagement. She took the opportunity to congratulate the newly elected Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the Executive Board and recognized the 2014 President and Bureau as well as the Governments of Afghanistan and Viet Nam. In that regard, she commended the respective UN-Women representatives and UN-Women country teams for their excellent work.

67. Additionally, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked Member States that had made pledges for 2015 and beyond and those that had indicated that they would double their contributions or make other significant increases. She quoted the statement of the Deputy Executive Director, Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau that: "We must not only be fit for purpose but also financed for purpose." She reiterated the call of donors and developing countries alike for robust financing of UN-Women to close the resource gap, prioritizing core resource and enhancing the quality of non-core funds, including supporting the trust funds. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director assured the Executive Board of the commitment of UN-Women to continue to diversify and seek new partners and resources. She concluded by urging the Board to build on its commitment even

further, towards pursuing the centrality of gender equality and women's empowerment in global plans, the post-2015 agenda, and a planet 50-50 by the year 2030.

68. The President of the Board expressed his appreciation to the Vice-Presidents for their collaboration and to the Member States for their strong commitment. He also thanked all those concerned for their presentations, in particular with respect to audit and evaluations, and looked forward to the structured dialogue on financing at the upcoming second regular session. In closing, he urged Member States to channel any advice and/or feedback that they might have at any time, through their respective Vice-Presidents. The meeting was then adjourned.

Annex I

Decisions adopted at the annual session of 2015

2015/2
Progress report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women on the strategic plan, 2014-2017

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women on the progress made on the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2014-2017, including operational activities in 2014,[a] and welcomes the achievements made in its implementation, as described in the report;

2. *Takes note with concern* of the ongoing funding gap, and encourages all countries in a position to do so to increase their voluntary contributions, especially to regular resources, to ensure the full and effective implementation of the strategic plan, 2014-2017;

3. *Requests* UN-Women to continue to improve its efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability;

4. *Takes note* of the progress made in the reporting on the results of the implementation of the strategic plan, 2014-2017, and requests the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to make further improvements in the annual reporting on the strategic plan by incorporating summarized information on progress made on the integrated results framework and to provide further analysis on what drives or hinders the performance of UN-Women, in order to increase its effectiveness, as appropriate;

5. *Requests* UN-Women to address in more detail, in its annual reporting, the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations operational activities for development;

6. *Decides* to transmit the report to the Economic and Social Council.

2015/3
Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2014

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2014 and the programme of work for 2015 of the independent Evaluation Office;[b]

2. *Welcomes* the efforts made by UN-Women and the progress achieved in systematic strengthening of the evaluation function;

[a] UNW/2015/6.
[b] UNW/2015/5.

3. *Also welcomes* the progress of UN-Women in leading system-wide gender evaluation efforts;

4. *Requests* UN-Women to continue to strengthen its evaluation capacities and to allocate adequate human and financial resources to the evaluation function;

5. *Emphasizes* that evaluation should be country-driven and that programme countries should have greater ownership and leadership in the evaluation of all forms of assistance;

6. *Requests* UN-Women to enhance the coverage of evaluations, implementation rate of planned evaluations, submission of management responses and use of evaluation recommendations in its work;

7. *Also requests* UN-Women to continue to pursue United Nations system-wide gender evaluation efforts and to foster innovative partnerships for national evaluation capacity development, and commends the efforts of UN-Women in this regard.

2015/4
Report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014;[c]

2. *Expresses* its continuing support for the audit and investigation functions within UN-Women;

3. *Requests* the internal audit and investigation offices to include in annual reports:

(a) An opinion based on the scope of work undertaken and on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Entity's framework of governance and risk management and control;

(b) A concise summary of work and the criteria that support the opinion;

(c) A statement of conformance with the internal audit standards being adhered to;

(d) A view on whether the resourcing of their function is appropriate, sufficient and effectively deployed to achieve the desired internal audit and investigation coverage;

4. *Takes note* of the report of the Audit Advisory Committee for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014.[d]

[c] UNW/2015/4.
[d] UNW/2015/4/Add.1.

Annex II

Pledges received at the annual session of 2015

Member State	*Currency*	*Pledge to core resources (in thousands)*	*Year period*
Australia	Australian dollars	7 800	2015
Austria	Euros	250	2015
Belgium	Euros	4 000	2015
Bulgaria	United States dollars	15	2015
Chile	United States dollars	100	2015
Colombia	United States dollars	1	2015
Costa Rica	United States dollars	10	2015
Dominican Republic	United States dollars	20	2015-2018
Finland	United States dollars	15 167	2015
Gambia	United States dollars	.5	2015
Ireland	Euros	1 500	2015
Israel	United States dollars	500	2015-2016
Italy	Euros	1 200	2015
Japan	United States dollars	5 000	2015
Kenya	United States dollars	100	2015-2018
Kuwait	United States dollars	200	2015-2018
Lao People's Democratic Republic	United States dollars	1	2015
Maldives	United States dollars	1	2015
Mozambique	United States dollars	20	2015-2018
Netherlands	United States dollars	4 535	2015
Norway	Norwegian krone	95 000	2015
Panama	United States dollars	30	2015-2018
Spain	Euros	1 500	2015
United Arab Emirates	United States dollars	7 218	2014-2014
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Pound sterling	25 000	2015-2016

Note: In addition to the Member States listed above, Bangladesh, Bhutan, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Germany, Grenada, Iceland, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malawi, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and Uruguay made pledges to core resources, the details of which are to be confirmed.

Pledges to non-core resources

Member State	*Currency*	*Pledge (in thousands)*	*Year period*
Australia	Australian dollars	6 500	2015
Finland	United States dollars	4 000	2015
Germany	Euros	1 500	2015
Japan	United States dollars	15 000	2015
United Arab Emirates	United States dollars	2 781	2014-2015

Note: In addition to the Member States listed above, Austria, Estonia and Norway made pledges to the non-core resources, the details of which are to be confirmed.

Pledges to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

Austria, Ireland and the United Kingdom made pledges to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, the details of which are to be confirmed.